

THE IDENTITY OF *MAMESTRA PASSA* AND *MORRISONIA*  
*PERACUTA* OF MORRISON (LEPIDOPTERA:  
NOCTUIDAE: HADENINAE)

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*Abstract.*—*Mamestra passa* Morrison,<sup>1</sup> 1874, is shown to be a synonym of *Graphania mutans* (Walker, 1857) from New Zealand, and the synonymy of *Morrisonia peracuta* Morrison, 1874, with *Persectania aversa* (Walker, 1856), stated as probable by Common in 1954, is made positive by the designation of a lectotype for *Morrisonia peracuta*.

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Morrison's description of *Mamestra passa* (1874b) is excellent, and I came to the conclusion inasmuch as the type-locality was California that, if the moth described was North American, it was a western species of *Xylomyges* (*recte Egira*). However, extensive collecting in California by various collectors, especially William Bauer and John Buckett, failed to produce any moth that fitted Morrison's description.

The species was carried in North American lists under *Mamestra* Ochsenheimer through Dyar's 1902 [1903] List. In 1905 Hampson, without examining the type, placed the species in *Polia* Ochsenheimer, and it has been carried since then in that genus near *P. latex* Guenée where Smith placed it in 1890 when he revised the genus *Mamestra*.

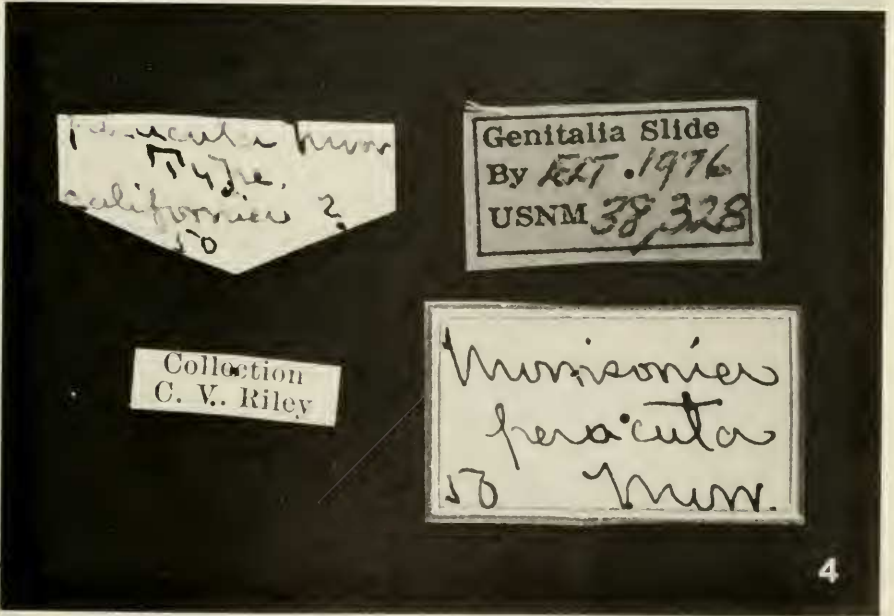
Through the kindness of Frederick W. Stehr, Roland L. Fisher, and Dean L. Haynes of the Department of Entomology of Michigan State University the type of *passa* was brought to Cornell where I was able to study and photograph it. The moth seemed familiar, but it was obviously not a North American species. For a time the possible country of origin was a puzzle; then I remembered that there were a number of *Xylomyges*-like moths in New Zealand, and with that a fact the answer was evident. The type of *Mamestra passa* is a specimen of the very common, widespread, and variable New Zealand species *Graphania mutans* (Walker, 1857). The type of *passa* matches very well two of the contrastingly marked females in a series of *mutans* sent to me a long time ago by W. George Howes of Dunedin, New Zealand.

*Hadena mutans* Walker was placed in *Morrisonia* by Hampson (1905) in



Figs. 1, 2. *Mamestra passa*. 1, Type, female. 2, Pin labels for type.

*Maoria*, a new genus, by Warren (1912), and by most modern workers, but *Maoria* Warren is preoccupied by *Maoria* Laporte, 1868, in the Coleoptera and by *Maoria* Pilsbry, 1892, in the mollusks. However, *mutans* is conge-



Figs. 3, 4. *Morrisonia peracuta*. 1, Lectotype, female. 2, Pin labels for lectotype.

neric with *Graphania disjungens* (Walker, 1858), the type of *Graphania* Hampson, 1905, and *mutans* has been placed in that genus by Dugdale, 1971.

*Polia passa* (Morrison) should be removed from North American lists and placed as a synonym of *Graphania mutans* (Walker), NEW SYNONYMY. The type of *passa*, like that of *Morrisonia peracuta* Morrison, was not from the locality stated, but from New Zealand. Morrison did not state how the specimens of these species came into his possession so there is no way to fix the responsibility for the error.

Edward L. Todd has suggested that a lectotype be designated for *Morrisonia peracuta* Morrison, 1874a, and thus render positive the synonymy considered as probable by Common, 1954. All four specimens that Morrison referred to in his description of *peracuta* can apparently be accounted for; one is in the British Museum (Natural History) from the Grote Collection from the Collection of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences, two are in the U.S. National Museum from the C. V. Riley Collection from Morrison's Collection, and one is in the Collection of the Department of Entomology of Michigan State University from the Tepper Collection from Morrison's Collection. One of the specimens in the U.S. National Museum bears the peculiar five-sided type label of Morrison; this specimen is designated the LECTOTYPE and has so been labelled. The moth and the pin labels are illustrated. This specimen is conspecific with *Leucania avera* Walker, 1856, and thus *Morrisonia peracuta* is a junior synonym of *Persectania avera* (Walker).

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